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# Spartan Daily

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THURSDAY SEPTEMBER

04 2008

## STUDENT CULTURE

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## OPINION

EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE



**Learning the ABCs** in a language without As, Bs and Cs.

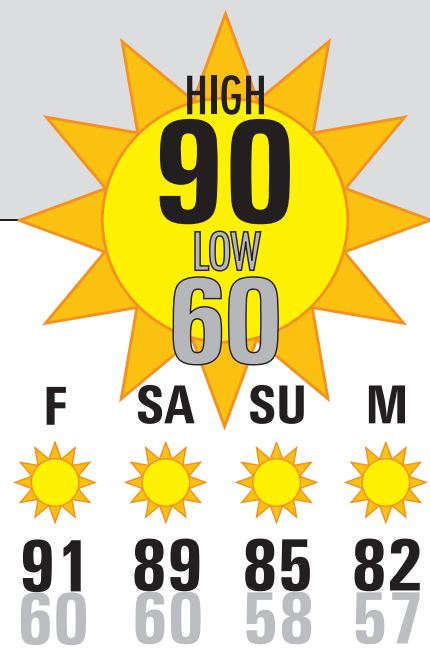
**Organizations entice potential members at faire**

RYAN BUCHAN  
Staff Writer

Student-filled tables packed the Paseo de Cesar Chavez yesterday as organizers passed out fliers and information about the different organizations. "I really like what I am seeing because it shows they are really encouraging incoming freshman to get involved" said Amy Martinez, an undeclared freshman.

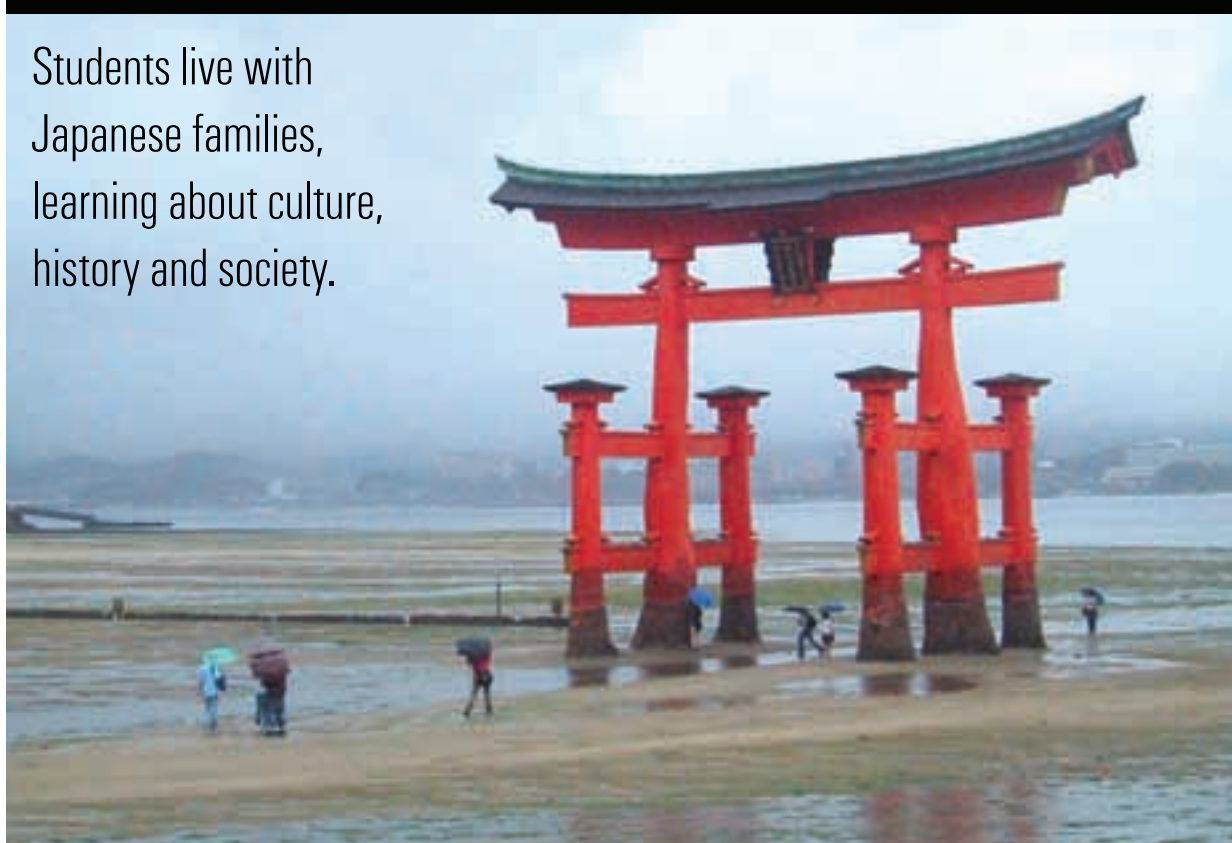
SJSU Student Involvement organizes the event every semester to help students know what opportunities are available to them.

►► **FAIRE**page5



# Exploring Japan up close

Students live with Japanese families, learning about culture, history and society.



YA-AN CHAN / Spartan Daily

The Torii Gate is the entrance to the Itsukushima Shrine, located on Miyajima Island in Hiroshima, Japan.

YA-AN CHAN  
Staff Writer

Sixty-three years after the U.S. dropped the world's first atomic bomb, a crowd of 21 SJSU students stood in silence in front of the historical Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, Japan, on June 20.

"The first thing that came into my mind was, 'Did the U.S. really do this?'" said David Tacmo, a junior graphic design major. "In my heart, I just felt like I had to respect the people who suffered a lot from the bombing. It was a feeling of remorse from everyone."

On a trip to explore the Japanese

culture, participants of the SJSU faculty-led study abroad program arrived in Japan on May 30 where they would live for four weeks in Uji City, a city on the southern outskirts of Kyoto.

For many students, it was their first time visiting Japan.

"Before going on the trip, I really did not know what to expect," said Julie Hock, a junior advertising major. "I thought I might end up eating a lot of sushi and seeing a bunch of similar-looking places."

Instead, the students' experiences mirrored what Japanese Professor Keach Inaba had initially envisioned for them.

"I wanted the students to get to the heart of Japanese culture," Inaba said, "including not only Japanese traditional performing arts ... but also Japanese pop culture."

According to SJSU's Study Abroad Web site, the four-week program focused on Kyoto and provided students with an overview of Japanese culture, history and society.

In addition to the lectures on Japanese history and traditional performing arts, students spent a lot of their time out in eight cities witnessing Japanese culture and

►► **JAPAN**page4

# Emergency notification system still under the radar

ANDREA FRAINER  
Staff Writer

Despite the fliers, posters, e-mails and announcements advertising Alert-SJSU, only 16 percent of the SJSU community has signed up for the mass messaging system designed to notify students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

"This would enable us to get a message out to the students to avoid a certain area, to shelter in place or to lockdown a classroom," said Special Services Lieutenant Frank Belcastro.

Powered by Connect-ED, a mass messaging platform designed for higher education, Alert-SJSU gives the university the means to reach students, faculty and staff within minutes. Instructions would be sent to recipients via e-mail or text message and audio messages would be sent to cell phones or landlines. A message would also be broadcasted to classrooms through a public address system.

Partly inspired by last year's Virginia Tech shooting that claimed 32 lives, the university implemented Alert-SJSU as a precautionary measure against unforeseen circumstances.

"I know that people in general and students particularly, like to think that nothing bad is ever going to happen," Belcastro said. "But in emergency planning we say you always think the best, but you got to plan for the worst."

Elyssa Fox, a sophomore psychology major, thinks it would be a good idea to have an alert system to keep

►► **ALERT**page2

# MySJSU bogged down as semesters begin statewide

ALLIE FIGURES  
Staff Writer

Logging into MySJSU has been a problem for students in recent weeks because of high user volume.

"Lately, students have not been able to sign onto the system," said Chezka Esposo, a junior pre-nursing major, who works as a receptionist at the Common Management Systems Office in Clark Hall.

The system, powered by People-

Soft, is experiencing slow performance with thousands of students on campus trying to do the same thing at the same time, said Carrie Medders, a manager at the CMS Project Office.

But SJSU students are not the only ones; the entire CSU system is run off hardware based in Salt Lake City.

"With multiple campuses starting school, the capacity to perform transactions was heavily impacted," Medders said.

Veronica Sanchez, an undeclared sophomore, said some students are actually able to log into the MySJSU system, but the system immediately logs them out.

"It happens every time they try to log in," she said.

Kaycie Perez, a sophomore Spanish major, had problems logging in on the first day of school.

"I was trying to get on to find out where my class was," she said.

"Sometimes it can take 30 minutes to an hour to finally get in the system."

Perez advised that students not wait until the last minute when dealing with MySJSU.

"It can be really stressful," said Lauren Gray, a junior political science major.

"Sometimes it will just log you off without warning."

It is not just students having prob-

►► **HELPDESK**page2

# Students yearn for financial discipline; upcoming class to aid cause

KAAJAL MORAR  
Staff Writer

It's that time again.

It's time to buy books, notebooks and parking permits. It's time for a new school outfit, the latest iPod and the latest laptop.

It's that time to spend and spend and wonder when the spending stops.

If this sounds familiar, perhaps it's time to take control of where the money is going. "Credit cards are killers," said Mary Calegari, a professor in the College of Business.

Students spending on a whim need to take control before it gets out of hand, Calegari added.

Freshman Indira Alicusic, a child development major said she has trouble keeping track of her spending habits.

"I'm always swiping the card," she said. "My parents pay for my school supplies, but I pay for anything else I need, and food on campus is really expensive."

Rachael Foust, a senior accounting major, has learned to take her money by the reins and keep it in check.

Foust said she created a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet as an easier way to track her money. She also makes it a

point to ration herself by withdrawing a set amount of money per week without returning to the bank for more.

Still, other students have trouble.

Heather Morgan, an interior design major, said she goes out to eat a lot.

"I spend money at least twice a week," she said.

Morgan said she knows how much she's spending because she keeps track of it while she's spending, but also relies on her statements in case she falls behind.

Calegari said the solution to suffering finances is to prioritize spending habits.

"You cannot be spending more than what you earn," Calegari said. "You must learn to live within your own means."

In response, the College of Business is in the process of creating a G.E. class to help students learn how to budget their money, Calegari said.

She said the class isn't offered yet, but in the next year students will have a new source for improving their financial standing.

"The class will teach students to balance their checkbook, buying a car, and credit card basics," said Calegari. "We are working on something to educate the majority of the students."

## Financial Stability

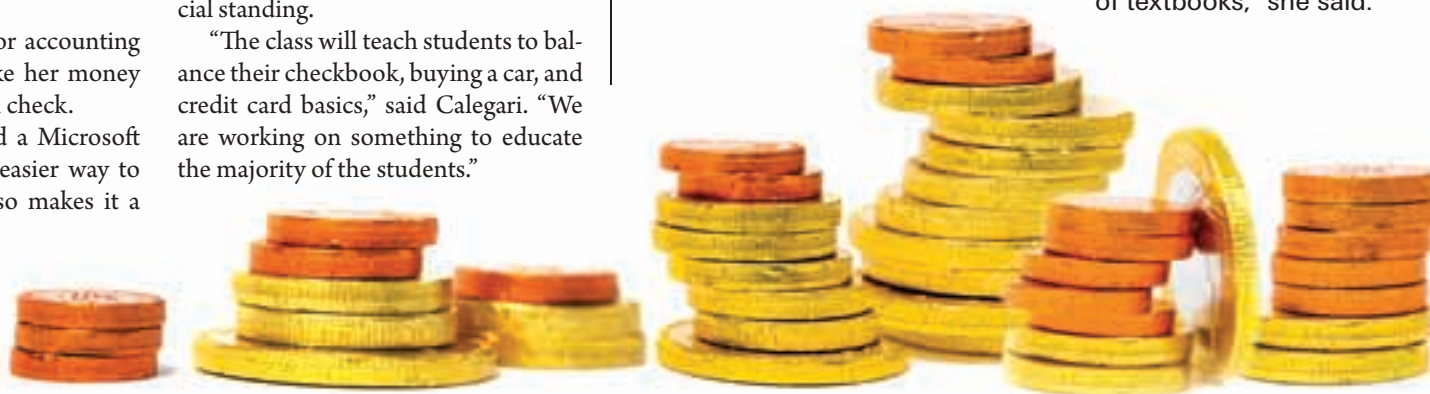
**For students who are willing to change their ways, here are a few tips to achieve financial stability:**

- \$** Buy a parking permit for the Park and Ride lot, Foust suggested. It's \$100 cheaper than the on-campus garages. Also, carpooling can help save gas money.
- \$** Ride a bike and use the bicycle enclosures around campus and The Valley Transportation Authority pass for free bus and light rail rides, suggests the Transportation Solutions Web site.

- \$** Make coffee at home instead of purchasing from coffee shops. "You save \$5 for every day you would have bought coffee," Calegari said.

- \$** Finally, Calegari suggests prioritize spending and understand what financial limits are in place and live within those limits.

"I've had students tell me that they can't afford textbooks, but they'll be walking around with an iPhone. The price for an iPhone will cover the cost of textbooks," she said.





► **ALERT** Opinions on emergency system vary; one student says text message not necessary

people safe. “It’s such a big place, she said. “How are you going to know if anything’s happening?”

Alert-SJSU is available to all students, faculty and staff at the university, but it’s a voluntary program for which individuals sign up through MySJSU.

“(The university) wants you to make your own decision,” Belcastro said. “It’s a decision I believe is easy to make. There is nothing within that system that’s going to take any freedom away from you. It’s going to give you a piece of information for you to act on.”

Zaki Khan, a senior engineering major, said he would have

signed up for the program if he had heard of it.

One student said he thought the message would reach him too late.

“Most of the time we’re all in class and we have our phones off,” said Michael Love, a junior marketing major. “So if something goes down, how are we going to know if the phone’s off?”

Tommy Levesque, a sophomore sociology major, said he felt he would get the information anyways. “If it would be such an emergency, I wouldn’t need a text,” he said.

While some students question the program’s effectiveness, others

agree with its practicality but have yet to sign up for the program.

“It’s just something I haven’t got around to doing yet,” said Michelle Sohn, a freshman psychology major. “I think it’s a good idea because no matter how safe you feel, there is still people out there that can mess something up.”

The university is planning a publicity campaign to generate awareness of Alert-SJSU, Belcastro said.

“It’s a very effective system,” he said. “It’s going to work well and we don’t anticipate any problems with it at all. It’s just getting the people to sign up.”

► **HELPDESK** University Help Desk unable to aid students, faculty with MySJSU problems

lems with MySJSU. Faculty members and staff have also experienced system errors.

“I have still not been able to log into my account,” humanities professor Mary Conroy said. “I think it has something to do with my password.”

Faculty members use MySJSU to access student grades, update class rosters, view academic advising information and to communicate with students, according to the system’s Web site.

The University Help Desk, located on the first floor of Clark Hall, is the first place students go for help with their MySJSU accounts, said Cuong Luong, a senior computer engineering major who works at the help desk.

“We mostly deal with resetting passwords for SJSUOne,” said Luong.

According to its Web site, SJSUOne is the system involved with campus wireless access and the activation of student e-mail accounts.

When students go to the Help Desk for assistance with MySJSU, the only solution Luong can give them is the e-mail and voicemail to the CMS Help Desk. But because of an overload of requests the response time now takes longer than the usual one or two business days.

“It’s bothering me that I cannot check my message on MySJSU,” said Lauren Welch, a communication disorders major. “I’ve sent (the Help Desk)

an e-mail and I still haven’t heard back.”

Luong said many students are having problems logging in because their passwords are supposed to be reset every 90 days, according to its Web site. Trying to use an expired password several times results in the account becoming temporarily disabled.

“I didn’t know I had my caps lock on, I tried to log in, and after a couple of times it locked me out,” said Lauren Gray, a political science major.

Medders said the system generally works very well for students, staff and faculty.

“CSU is looking to improve the overall performance of the system,” she said.

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# Joining the 'big political circus'

## Sociology students promoting legislation attend convention

JON XAVIER  
Staff Writer

When SJSU graduate student Joshua Barousse arrived at the Democratic National Convention last week, he said he didn't know what to think at first.

"None of us had ever been to a convention," he said. "The best way to describe it is a big political circus. It was so crazy. You see protests; you see a lot of different people just lobbying and advocating for all different causes. It was really an experience."

Roberto Garcia-Cerrallos, a senior sociology major who was also at the convention, agreed.

"(When you watch the convention on television) you only see the one platform," he said. "But the convention is happening in all sorts of places. There's different caucuses and different organizations, and different events all over the city. It's sort of misleading to just see the convention as what's happening at the arena."

Barousse and Garcia-Cerrallos were two of four SJSU students who went to the convention to represent the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project, a student organization that lobbies to create a public works program to benefit recovery efforts in areas ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Their goal was to meet face-to-face with policymakers to drum up support for House Resolution 4048, a bill they helped introduce into the House of Representatives, said Scott Myers-Lipton, an SJSU sociology professor who organized the trip.

It was a task that was daunting at first, Garcia-Cerrallos said. "The first day we got there, we

were kind of shocked and we were kind of disoriented," he said. "But by the third day, we were talking to all these congress members and

"We didn't see any other organizations advocating for policy, except us. I think if more students were getting involved, we'd see a lot more

filiated with the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project and did not go to the convention, had a similar reaction when he heard about the project.

"If it doesn't accomplish anything directly, I think it's good for these students who do want to be politically active, to at least learn the process," he said. "That way it makes them more effective as students and as citizens as well."

"It's usually the same people, volunteering with different organizations, or contributing in different ways," Giuffra added.

"I think if more students were getting involved, we'd see a lot more change in this country."

**ROBERTO GARCIA-CERALLLOS**  
senior sociology major

knowing where to go to be where these congress members were to advocate for our bill."

The students got to meet with a lot of congress members over the course of the trip. On the last day alone they were able to meet with about 10 congress members, Garcia-Cerrallos said.

"That was at the Congressional Black Caucus Institute," Barousse said. "That was, I wouldn't say the highlight of the trip for me, but it was the most effective. ... It's chaired by Bennie Thompson, he's chair of the Homeland Security Committee. He was really key. I got him to sign on."

Garcia-Cerrallos called the trip "a political learning ground."

"Our biggest goal is recovery, for the people of the Gulf Coast to rebuild their own community," he said. "But I think another thing we've gained from this is student empowerment. We realized how much power students actually have, and how much we can actually make a change if we pick a cause we're passionate about and push for it all the way to the top."

It was an approach that was rare for student organizations at the convention, Garcia-Cerrallos said.

change in this country," he said.

Bryce Giuffra, a senior political science student who is not af-

## SPARTAGUIDE

### EVENTS CALENDAR

04 TODAY

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Last Music in the Park show in partnership with SJSU Associated Students. The 20th anniversary season of Music in the Park closes out with a full lineup. In partnership with Mix 106.5 and SJSU Associated Students, the free show features Greg Camp of Smash Mouth, The Last Goodnight and King of Ska Dave Wakeling of The English Beat. 5:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at the Plaza de Cesar Chavez, Market and San Fernando streets, Contact: Rick Jensen at (408) 279-1775 or [rjensen@sjdowntown.com](mailto:rjensen@sjdowntown.com), [www.sjdowntown.com](http://www.sjdowntown.com)

#### Bible Study

Acts 2 Christian Fellowship has weekly Bible studies on Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the Guadalupe room. Contact: Justin at [jfoen1@yahoo.com](mailto:jfoen1@yahoo.com) or (415) 786-9873

#### Counseling Services Make Learning Styles Work For You Workshop

This workshop presents a variety of learning styles. You discover your preferred style and how you can use it to improve your performance in all of your classes. 3 p.m. in Clark Hall 118 Contact: Veronica Mendoza at [veronica.mendoza@sjsu.edu](mailto:veronica.mendoza@sjsu.edu)

Sparta Guide is provided free of charge to students, faculty and staff members. The deadline for entries is noon, three working days before the desired publication date. Space restrictions may require editing of submission. Entries are printed in the order in which they are received. Submit entries online at [thespartandaily.com](http://thespartandaily.com) or in writing at DBH 209.

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## ► JAPAN 'I wasn't just observing it; I was involved in it,' student says

history imprinted on the country's architecture.

The Itsukushima Shrine in Miyajima Island was Nancy Thai's favorite site.

"It was nice seeing how this little island had its own culture developed," said the senior illustration major.

Miyajima Island, with an area of less than 12 square miles, has long been viewed as a holy island of Shintoism, Japan's primary religion, and a focal point for people's beliefs, according to the Miyajima Tourist Association Web site.

While at the island, students also walked through the shrine's famous Torii Gate located on the Seto Inland Sea, as the low tide allowed them to pass through the red 16-meter-high gate.

But what Kevin Frame, a se-

nior computer science major, and Staci Helms, a senior international business major, said they learned the most from was living with the host families.

"I kind of felt like a big cousin in the family," said Frame, who stayed with the Urasugi family of five along with two other SJSU students.

Frame said the father took them for drives around the outskirts of the Kyoto, while the mother made them yukatas, a traditional Japanese summer garment.

"The family is the most important thing I learned," Frame said. "I learned a sense of community as I became a part of the family's normal life. I wasn't just observing it; I was involved in it."

Inaba said one of his goals was to expose students to the relationship between language and culture.

Even though her host family, the Taniguchi family, spoke English well, Helms said she learned so much of the culture as the parents tried to incorporate tradition at all times. One day, they dressed her up in traditional Japanese kimonos and on another, they taught her calligraphy.

According to Helms, the Taniguchi family always explained to her the reason certain things are important in Japanese culture, from regular house rules such as wearing slippers in the house to learning traditional arts.

"Of course I would make mistakes," Helms said. "But the family was always there to help me."

This close interaction between students and Japanese families not only changed the host families' perspective of American stereo-

types, but also helped the students discover new sides of themselves.

Helms said that since her return from Japan, she has become more respectful of others and more aware of her surroundings.

Frame, on the other hand, said being in a foreign country has taught him to take more risks and be open to new environments.

"I became more willing to accept what other people do as I became part of the family's normal life," he said.

At the end of the program, students delivered speeches on stage before their host families in an auditorium.

"Thank you guys for helping me open myself up more," said Tacmo. "I found something within me that I didn't know before."

YA-AN CHAN / Spartan Daily

A dome that was bombed and damaged during the atomic bombing on Hiroshima, Japan.

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► **FAIRE** Religious groups, club sports teams, academic clubs and Greeks show up to event



DEREK SIJDER / Spartan Daily

Merlin Valencia (right), a junior aviation major and member of the Kendo and Naginata Club, shows a fellow student the "way of the sword" at El Paseo de Cesar Chavez during the Student Organization Faire on Wednesday.

"A great way to gain a lot of skills is being part of a student organization," said Pauline Le, coordinator of student organization development of SJSU Student Involvement.

About a third of the groups attended the event. Le said the reason more groups don't attend is because many of them are specialized groups that don't want to recruit from the general population.

There are only 125 spots available and spots are chosen on a first-come, first-serve basis, Le added.

There were religious groups such as the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and the Soka Lions

Buddhists for Peace, fraternities and sororities, club sports such as hockey and the Triathlon Club and academic clubs such as the Pre-Dental Club.

"It makes more memories other than just going to school," said Jan Salume, a senior biochemistry major and a member of fraternity, Pi Kappa Alpha.

Different groups had different approaches during the event.

Social Change Through Music had guitarist Chris Marsol perform at the event.

Race fans even had an outlet at SJSU with the Society of Automotive Engineers International,

which build an open-wheel race car and races it against 150 different schools.

The One-in-Four club, a club for men who want to prevent rapes, had a booth at the event.

"The more people we affect, the more the word gets out," said Trevor Diep, a fifth-year business marketing major. "You never know who's going to be a rapist."

Joining clubs is beneficial to students, one club member said.

"To get involved motivates you more," said Tim Lopez, a senior geography major, who works at SJSU's radio station, KSJS-FM radio.

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# Pajamas and a suit, all you'll ever need



SELMA  
SKOKIC

The other day I was walking on campus with a friend, and she happened to mention something that I used say quite often. She turned to me and said, “You know the funniest thing you ever said was that in America all you need is a pair of pajamas and a work outfit.”

That got me thinking. I went home, dug through my closet, and lo and behold, three-fourths of my clothing were for work and one-fourth was sleeping attire.

Now you may wonder what I am talking about. Think about this: Last time you went shopping, did you buy a cute dress for a party or did you buy black slacks for work? When was the last time you actually enjoyed yourself?

Although I came to this country as an immigrant in '99, I consider myself an American on a lot of levels. I even recently became a citizen.

I grew up in a small country called Bosnia and Herzegovina,

and we consider ourselves to be quite European.

Growing up, I remember no matter how busy your life got, you always had time to take a nap. Meal times were never missed; we always ate on time, even if it meant leaving work early.

One thing I could never wrap my head around was the fact that in America people don't have the time to do anything except sleep, work or go to school — hence the idea that all you need is work clothes and pajamas.

Why is that? Is it because Americans are all workaholics compared to Europeans who seem to have more free time?

If I were living outside of this country, I would definitely say yes. However, I have experienced this on my own. You cannot survive any other way.

In order to obtain a higher education you need money, therefore you must work. Once you obtain that education, you need to work dawn till dusk to support your family or pay off your student loans. It is not because Americans do not know how to have fun, but rather because it is a matter of survival.

I also lived in Germany for a while. The Germans take their free time to a whole new level. Three p.m. is official naptime. If you lived in an apartment complex like I did, everyone would take a nap at 3 p.m.

They have an infinite number of vacation days, too. I recently called up a friend in Germany, and she said that she just got back from her one-month vacation.

Here in America, if you get two weeks off, you can consider yourself pretty lucky. Try asking for a month off, and your boss will reply by answering, “Your job may not be here when you get back.”

A friend admitted to me once that she usually spends about \$ 1,000 on work clothes per six months, and then feels guilty to buy any other clothes not related to work.

Countless times, I have caught myself thinking about clothes that I could buy for work, versus the usual “cutsie” stuff for partying. Somehow this makes me feel like an old person, and I wonder where did my youth go?

It is easy to say, “Well, I'll take more time for myself and enjoy life and not work as much.” Believe me, I have tried it.

This past summer vacation, all I did was work.

Sure I had my days off, but I did not use them to enjoy myself. Why? Out of guilt I guess. I felt that I could work more and save more money.

Somehow I accomplish less when I don't have a lot of things to do.

During the semester, I have time to work, go to school, and sometimes go out. But during vacation, I never accomplish anything and never have enough time. In a sense, when we are busy, we budget our time accordingly and make time to accomplish all we need. When there is a lot of free time, we always put it off for another day, and never get it done.

I would say that Americans are smart in this aspect, because they do have busy schedules, but they accomplish their goals. People may look down on this and give it a name such as the “inability to have fun.”

However, in Europe, putting something off for another day is no big deal, and yet Europeans wonder why the U.S. is usually ahead of them in many ways.

Selma Skokic is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

# Bucking tradition and following the path of my heart



KAAJAL  
MORAR

We get a lot of looks, my boyfriend and I.

Sometimes they're friendly, but many times they're hostile. The negative looks usually come from fellow Indian people, because I'm not dating an Indian man.

I don't go out of my way to avoid dating Indians. I've grown up with Caucasians my entire life, so it's no big deal for me that I'm attracted to them. My parents feel differently about my future as a wife.

They say I can marry whomever I want – as long as he's Indian. Anyone else will otherwise be shunned. If I don't find an Indian man, they will arrange a marriage for me. However, I refuse to marry blindly into a possibly cold, unloving marriage to a man with whom I won't get along.

Having grown up within the American culture, I, too, expected to be able to go to my parents with a boy I liked and for them to accept him with open arms. But, after a few sharp words from my mother, I knew that wasn't going to happen.

I grew up lonely watching my friends date the boys on whom they crushed.

After a few years I put my foot down. I was not going to allow myself to become an adult without experiencing the joy of caring for someone.

In high school, at age 17, I dated my first boyfriend behind my parents' backs. I was thrilled; I was finally happy with someone I wanted to be with. Six months later we broke up, but I had no regrets.

It wasn't until my first year in college that I would date another man. He was sweet and kind, someone I would have loved to introduce to my parents, had they been more open. We too broke up, but remained on good terms.

After dating him, I was firm in my belief that I was going to marry whomever I pleased. To hell with tradition. Why should I put my happiness aside, throw my entire life away, because my parents wanted it so?

I respect their wishes and understand where they are coming from. Both my mother and father grew up in conservative, traditional families and have not considered the idea of marrying someone their parents didn't introduce to them.

I find arranged marriages appalling. Not only would I be miserable, but an Indian husband would not likely be accepting of my distinct American habits and ideals.

I was surfing through the Internet one day and found a site called [www.lovingday.org](http://www.lovingday.org). It is a Web site dedicated to celebrating interracial and intercultural relationships.

I learned that interracial marriages were illegal until 1967, which surprised me, because that was only 41 years ago.

What caught my attention was a section called, “Real Couples,” where men and women described their experiences dating outside of their race.

I felt encouraged, almost proud, to see people risking their reputations to be with the person they loved. A couple stories struck a chord with me, speaking of the shame they caused their families and the threats they received from their parents.

I have it coming too, but I'm not afraid. I care about my family, but why should I be limited to the people I choose to love?

The main goals of the LovingDay Web site are, “To fight prejudice through education and to build a sense of community among people who engage in meaningful interracial and intercultural relationships.” I fully support these goals. It's not easy receiving angry looks from strangers as though my relationship were inferior or blasphemous. Who are they to judge the dynamics of my relationship? The problem is that many are unwilling to understand and accept my unique choice for a partner. For my family, tradition must survive, so marriage to anyone other than my parents' choice is out of the question ... until now.

I chose not to forsake my happiness for tradition, and have been dating my boyfriend who is ... Well, does it really matter what he is? We are happy together, and for us, that's enough.

Kaajal Morar is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

## QUOTE of the DAY

“I can say without fear of contradiction that she is the only nominee in the history of either party who knows how to properly field dress a moose ... with the possible exception of Teddy Roosevelt.”

### FRED THOMPSON

*The former senator said at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn.*

# Bridge to Sarah Palin, aka to nowhere



TOMMY  
WRIGHT

WRIGHT  
ON THE LEFT

Before Friday, when John McCain made his vice presidential nominee public, Sarah Palin was a virtual unknown. On the day the announcement was made, there were 2.4 million visits to Palin's page on the most reliable source of information out there, Wikipedia.

A New York Times article on Aug. 31 detailed not only the visits made to the page, but the edits made to the page by a volunteer for the McCain campaign leading up to the big announcement.

While Wikipedia is a source that should be taken with a grain of salt, CNN calls itself “the Most Trusted Name in News.” Yet the headline of an article on their Web site from Wednesday claims “Palin's maverick trail goes from city hall to gov's mansion.”

Palin said in her speech after being added to the Republican ticket that she “stood up to politics as usual.” Yet she has connections to Sen. Ted Stevens, the longest serving senator in the history of the Republican Party.

A Washington Post article on Monday stated that Palin served as the director for a political group organized by Stevens, who was indicted in July on seven counts of

corruption. The article stated, “The group was designed to serve as a political boot camp for Republican women in the state.”

Palin received endorsements from Stevens in her campaign to become Alaska's governor, and she spoke on Stevens' behalf before the indictment in July, according to the article.

She also received at least \$4,500 in campaign contributions in her lieutenant governor run in 2002 from the same type of fundraising that was at the center of the Stevens corruption indictment, according to an Associated Press article on Wednesday.

In her introductory speech on Friday, she said that she stood up to the big oil companies. But she received donations from the founder as well as the vice president of VECO, an Alaska oil pipeline company that is involved in the Stevens scandal.

Palin's husband, Todd, works for BP Amoco PLC, an oil company. An article from KTUU, an NBC affiliate in Alaska, quoted both Todd and Sarah Palin in August 2007, saying they do not believe there is a conflict of interest.

Perhaps the biggest deception by Palin is her opposition to the infamous “Bridge to Nowhere.” According to a New York Times article on Sunday, the bridge would have connected Ketchikan to Gravina Island, Alaska. The \$233 million bridge connecting the island

with a population of only 50 people, according to the 2000 U.S. Census figures, was to be paid for with an earmark attached to a bill in the U.S. Congress.

But Palin backed the earmark for the bridge when she ran for governor in 2006, according to a USA Today article on Sunday. As mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, she hired a Washington lobbying firm that helped bring in \$8 million for projects in the town, which had a population of 9,780, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The provision for the bridge was eventually removed, but the money stayed in a transportation bill. According to an article on Monday in the New York Times, Alaska was able to keep the money and direct it to other projects.

Palin could be considered a maverick, but not in a kind way. According to a Wednesday article in the New York Times, her first months in office as mayor of Wasilla, Alaska were so alienating that there was an effort to recall her. The article stated that she talked about banning books from the library. She also forced all town employees to get her permission before they spoke with the media.

The New York Times article also stated that Palin forced out city employees who supported her rival, the incumbent mayor John C. Stein.

Palin is currently being investigated by the Alaska state

legislature for firing a public safety commissioner, Walter Monegan. According to an article from the Washington Post which was viewable online on Wednesday, Monegan had e-mails sent to him by Palin that support his contention that he was fired by her for not firing her former brother-in-law, state trooper Mike Wooten.

For a politician with a relatively short career, she brings a lot of baggage to the McCain ticket. If Palin is elected, she will bring change to the federal government and the country, but the differences will not be in the best interest of our country and the people. She has been disingenuous, and now that she is in the spotlight, more will be revealed about her past.

Perhaps I'm being a bit cynical about her. I guess I should turn to our president to see if she is truly a maverick.

“Governor Palin is a proven reformer who is a wise steward of taxpayer dollars and champion for accountability in government,” President Bush said in a statement shortly after she was added to the ticket.

In fact, the Republican National Committee Web site has a video on its main page titled: “Sarah Palin: Alaska Maverick.” So she must be a maverick if her party says so.

“Wright on the Left” appears every other Thursday. Tommy Wright is a Spartan Daily sports editor.

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SPORTS COMMENTARY

## Bay Area NFL teams mired in mediocrity

MATTHEW KIMEL  
Staff Writer

The San Francisco 49ers and the Oakland Raiders have a lot in common going into the 2008 NFL season. Both teams are unlikely to win half of their games, have a consistent starting quarterback or have an effective passing game.

On a positive note, though, the Bay Area teams should both finish with better records than last season.

In 2007, the 49ers were expected to be a playoff contender, yet they finished with a 5-11 record — the third worst of all NFC teams.

In 2008, it doesn't seem like the 49ers will be able to register more than seven wins. With two games against the St. Louis Rams and one against the Miami Dolphins, San Francisco has three freebies on its schedule.

At the beginning of the pre-season, nobody knew who the 49ers starting quarterback would be come opening day.

J.T. O'Sullivan was chosen to be the starter for the Red and Gold over Shaun Hill and Alex Smith, head coach Mike Nolan said in a press conference on Aug. 22.

O'Sullivan, a sixth-round draft pick from UC Davis in 2002, has yet to start a single NFL game, even though he has been a member of the New Orleans Saints, Green Bay Packers, Chicago Bears, Minnesota Vikings, New England Patriots, Carolina Panthers and Detroit Lions.

In NFL Europa, a league that folded in 2007, O'Sullivan lead the Frankfurt Galaxy to World Bowl XII and World Bowl XV, and was selected as the Co-NFL Europa Offensive MVP in the

2007 season. O'Sullivan and the Galaxy lost both World Bowl games.

Even with his European credentials, it's hard to imagine that O'Sullivan will be able to succeed against stiffer competition in the NFL.

More likely than not, O'Sullivan will lose the starting job before Week 3, though it's difficult to predict whether it will be Hill or Smith who replaces him. Smith started seven of 16 games last season, five of which ended in losses for the 49ers.

But then again, who's to say that either will do a much better job than O'Sullivan? Not coach Nolan. Don't be surprised to see all three of the quarterbacks get the starting call throughout the season.

The acquisition of wide receiver Isaac Bruce in the offseason may help a team that gained fewer passing yards than any other team in 2007, but somebody has to be able to get the ball to him.

\*\*\*

The Oakland Raiders have finished in last place in the AFC West every season since they took the division title in 2002.

Last year was not a golden season for the Sliver and Black, as they were able to rack up only four wins. But like San Francisco, Oakland will pick up a few more wins this year.

JaMarcus Russell, in just his second year out of LSU, has been pegged as the starting quarterback, and it would be somewhat shocking if the Raiders were able to tally more than six wins this season.

Russell started only one game in his rookie season, and has not

recorded any visually impressive statistics in preseason or regular season games.

While Russell's future may be bright, his present may not be so pleasant. He needs some time to adjust to the NFL, and his inexperience will show this year.

Don't be surprised if Andrew Walter gets a decent amount of playing time this season. Walter started eight games in 2006 for the Raiders, and is the most experienced of the three quarterbacks on the depth chart. The Raiders' quarterbacks have started only a combined 11 NFL games.

In 2007, the Raiders gained more passing yards per game than only one other team: the 49ers. The chances are astronomical that the Raiders passing game will improve significantly from last season.

The other major factor that seems to be holding the Raiders back from postseason glory, or even an 8-8 season, is their defense.

The Raiders gave up 398 points last year, and only six teams allowed more. Defense wins games, and the Raiders defense is not very strong.

On offense, the Raiders main threat will be their running attack once again.

The Raiders already have an established running game, and the addition of Darren McFadden, a first-round draft pick in the 2008 NFL Draft out of Arkansas, will surely strengthen their assault.

McFadden is sure to become a favorite of the Raider Nation in the years to come.

Aside from a few big runs here and there, however, the Raider Nation doesn't have anything to get too excited about just yet.



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